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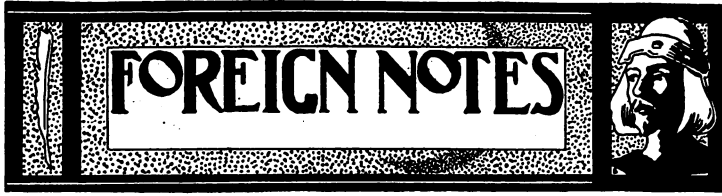
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LONDON, November 30.

The sensation of the London Fall Exhibitions has come through a painting hung in the Annual Exhibition in aid of the Artists' General Benevolent Institution. It is the famous "Venus with the Mirror," the only nude which Velasquez ever painted, although he painted a replica of this one which is now in the Hermitage collection of St. Petersburg. The Messrs. Thomas Agnew & Sons, who purchased it from the last owners, the Morritt family, of Rokeby Park, Yorkshire, hold it at half a million dollars.

This picture can be directly traced to Velasquez, who painted it after his second Italian journey. It is a wonderful example of morbidez, flesh painting, but also shows the limitation of Velasquez, who was not imaginative but a realist. This is not a goddess who reclines before the mirror which the Cupid holds, but a magnificent portrait of some Andalusian dancer, who risked the wrath of the Inquisition to pose for the master.

Only second in importance to this picture is one on exhibition at the Sulley Galleries. It is the Jan Vermeer from the Secretan collection. It is one of his less usual compositions, for instead of the figures being silhouetted in dark or flooded with light against a light background, they are seen in lights and half-lights upon an entirely dark ground. The design is magnificently broad, the divisions large and well marked, and treated with that peculiar flat, decorative effect which yet takes nothing from our sense of the reality of the scene. The color scheme is delicious; a pale saffron-yellow with white fur and one note of pale orange-scarlet is opposed to a tablecloth of Vermeer's peculiar and characteristic gray-blue, and behind this we get the suggestion of a stronger note of blue in the servant's apron, and a mass of gray-browns and brownish grays in her dress. There are passages—such as the rendering of the faint grayish bloom on the Chinese lacque box or the lady's pearl earring—which are miracles of technical skill at the service of an exquisite and recondite taste. One gets everywhere the sense of brilliant local color shimmering behind a veil of the tenderest gray atmosphere. The technical skill required to produce this effect is really more remarkable and its methods are more obscure than that displayed by Vermeer's contemporaries, however minute and brilliant their delineation of form; indeed, by sheer perfection of taste, for exquisite delicacy of perception of the purely material beauties of objects, such a painting as this could hardly be surpassed. Vermeer, like Terborgh and Metsu, attempts no criticism of life, he accepts things literally and perhaps prosaically; but his vision has a breadth and his design an ease which might befit a deeper significance, and which, in the absence of that, still give to his work a rare nobility and distinction.

More of a sensational nature is the large canvas to be seen at the Graves Galleries, Pall Mall, where "Red Sunday" is depicted by Albert Kossak, a Polish painter. It shows the street massacre in St. Petersburg on the 22d of January, when Father Gapon led that procession which was the first firebrand that has set all Russia aflame. It is like a *clou* of a Paris Salon.

The national monument to Mr. Gladstone, which was sculptured by Thorneycroft, has been unveiled and is one of the finest pieces of statuary in London. It makes an imposing appearance as the great statesman stands there in his Chancellor's robes.

It is the talk here, in the studios of those not qualified to put R.A. or A.R.A. behind their names, that the reason the usual annual exhibition of old masters at Burlington House has been changed to one of modern work is because of the apparent anxiety of the public to buy old masters instead of the work of academicians—hence jealous heartburnings. A regular "dog-in-the-manger" story. LEE.

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PARIS, December 2, 1905.

The engravers' art will be exploited at an important exhibition which is to be held here next spring. I have received a circular from M. Charles Launier, the secretary of the committee which has charge of the enterprise, from which I cull the statement that all the noted work done between 1805 and 1905 will be included, and that the exhibition will be of an international character. Ingres, Millet, Rousseau, Manet, Lepère, Whistler and many others may then be studied as to their method in handling the stylus.

The Petit Palais will soon have a Henner room, like it has a Ziem room, as M. Jules Henner, the nephew of the deceased artist, has informed the authorities that a number of paintings by Henner have been left to the city of Paris. These include several Alsatian types, a "Christ at the Tomb," and especially Henner's Salon picture of 1903, which dates back twenty years and which the artist could never be persuaded to sell.

Speaking of the Petit Palais, I am minded of a curious incident on my last visit to the Grand Palais opposite, to see the Salon d'Automn. I noticed an enterprising boy outside the building who will sell you a second-hand catalogue for 16 cents and buy it back again when the visitor comes out for 2 cents; thus reaping an endless chain of revenue, by which the purchaser saves 6 cents on the price of the catalogue inside. All these things give spice and local color to the life in Paris, and alternately amuse and enrage the foreigner. Perhaps the most irritating thing about the Grand Palais is that the doorkeeper refuses to accept anything except the exact fee for entrance, and refers one for change to a little bureau presided over by one of those brisk little women in a three-cornered shawl with which all public buildings in Paris abound, who charges you one sou for making the change. It goes decidedly against the grain to pay it.

Leon Lhermite has been elected a member of the French Academy of Fine Arts, to fill the place made vacant by the death of J. J. Henner. His principal rivals for the place were Besnard, Collin, Flameng and Robert-Fleury.

GAUL.

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BERLIN, December 1, 1905.

In these days of timid criticism, devoid alike of ardor and of conviction, criticism as practiced by Dr. Max Nordau blazes out like a star of the first magnitude in a hazy firmament. Each of his books registers a violent protest against the prevalent commercialism and servility of our critics. Exasperated at finding himself all too frequently alone in his opinion, he states it without reserve, without qualification, and with a severity of accent which breaks in like a thunderclap upon the concert of mutual admiration indulged in by contemporary criticism. Sincere to the point of brutality, he respects neither the glory consecrated by the complacency of alleged connoisseurs nor the genius that is admired by the ignorant mob. The ideal truth, the whole truth, the truth as he sees it—such seems to be his æsthetic criterion.

Just now he has come out in a new volume, "Von Kunst und Kunstlern," in which he makes a vigorous onslaught upon some of the most famous of the modern artists. The sculptor Rodin he considers a decadent, accuses him of childish eccentricities, and suggests that Rodin's "Porte de l'Enfer" is an illustration of hysterical epilepsy. Puvis de Chavannes, Besnard, and Carrière come in for a plentiful share of lively abuse.

There will be opened in Berlin in January an immense exhibition, organized with the co-operation of all Germany's important museums of the best paintings, water colors, drawings, and statuary made in Germany from 1775 to 1875. It will be the largest art exhibit of its kind made in recent years. Rumor has it that nothing of the last thirty years will be shown, owing to the Emperor's detestation of modern art tendencies, especially of the new school of impression.

v. K.

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ROME, December 4th.

The building of the electric railway from Rome to the Castelli Romani has furnished discoveries of archæological importance. Several boundary stones have been found in the neighborhood of the Marcian, what is now the Via del Mandrione, one of the most picturesque lanes in the suburbs of the city. One of these stones was, according to its inscription, erected by the "Emperor Augustus, son of the deified Cæsar." In the neighborhood of Ciampino a boundary or mile stone was found with this inscription:

"By the authority of the senate and people of Tusculum, Marcus Lorentius Atticus, superintendent of public works, has rebuilt from the foundations the compital shrine of the Augustan gods which belongs to the Vicus Angusculanus, and which has been injured by time and neglect."

A letter to the daily papers from the director of the excavations at Pompeii, Prof. Antonio Sogliano, announces the finding for the first time of the true *signum Christi* among the ruins of a Pompeian villa buried in the eruption of 79. The *signum*—in the shape of a monogrammatic cross framed in a crown of ivy—was found stamped on a terra-cotta lamp which was lying about nine feet above the floor of the apartment, at the point where the bed of ashes gives place to the bed of lapilli. The discovery, as announced by Sogliano, has made a considerable stir among the ordinary class of readers, who are evidently ignorant that the monogrammatic cross belongs to the third century after Christ, that is to say, it begins to appear in Christian utensils only a century and a half after the burial of Pompeii. I do not know the details of the find, nor can I explain how and in what circumstances a

lamp of the third, if not of the fourth century happens to be buried in a mass of rubbish formed apparently in the year 79. It was probably lost or dropped there by seekers after hidden treasures, of whose prowling among the half-buried remains of the city many traces have already been found. I need not repeat the statement that, for a long series of years after the catastrophe of 79, the Christians most carefully avoided making use of the sign of the cross, which was considered an *infamis stipes* by the Gentiles. Even in the seclusion of the catacombs, secure from profane intrusions, the sign is only alluded to under the symbolic shape of an anchor, of a trident, of a hammer, or of a *tau*. I am afraid that, as regards the question of the gospel among the Jewish colonists at Pompeii, and the possible constitution of a Christian nucleus within the walls of that delightful sea-resort, we must still hold fast to the opinion expressed by the late Commendatore de Rossi in the *Bullettino Cristiano*, 1864, p. 69-71, notwithstanding Prof. Sogliano's opinion that the great founder of the science of Christian archæology was but a fanciful dreamer.

In the last number of the *Arte*, Prof. Adolfo Venturi, the eminent art critic and director of the National (Corsini) Gallery, makes the following statement in connection with the alleged portrait of Pietro Aretino by Titian, which Prince Chigi sold some time ago to Messrs. Colnaghi, of London:

"Before expressing publicly my opinion on this controversy, I have again examined the vile canvas (*tela scompisciata*) in London. The picture is unworthy of being kept even in the storeroom of a public gallery. The head is painted against a grayish, opaque background, with faulty lines and flat surfaces, without transparency or warmth. The lips of the 'Aretino' are of a dull red, divided by a black line; the beard of a dirty gray; the neck has livid shadows. The garments are worthy of the head."

After criticising every other detail of the picture, Signor Venturi concludes by saying that the British public is as much in the wrong in rejoicing over this acquisition as the Italian in regretting its loss.

The International Art Exhibition at Venice, just closed, was most successful. The sale of paintings amounted to half a million liras. R. L.

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VIENNA, November 29, 1905.

The city of Vienna, Austria, is an example of how general an interest the population can have in art galleries. A few years ago the city council of Vienna decided to build a city art gallery and museum, to provide a home for the pictures and objects of art and historic interest.

All architects of Vienna were invited to compete in drawing general plans for the building, and a number of prizes for the best plans were awarded. The second prize went to an architect who represents the "modern" school of architecture. His design was original—different from many others. When the matter came up in the city council to select an architect out of the prize winners and have him draw the detail plans, many of the aldermen were in favor of the "modern" design. Their opposition and the support they were given by the people were so strong that the city council had plaster-of-Paris models made according to the drawings of the two first prize winners, who represented the old and modern school of architecture, in order to get a better idea of the building, and to give the people a chance to assist in judging. The models were exhibited in a large room. The crowds that came to see and judge were so big that a larger hall had to be taken. During the Sundays, thousands of the working class were crowding the exhibition hall, criticising and judging.

The public interest was so great that in the election of aldermen, that followed soon afterwards, the different political parties made their position in that question of art a point of their platform, and in the electoral fight the question of "modern" or "old" school was a leading one.

This happens in a city where the population gets their ethical education through galleries and museums, of which the city of Vienna has more than six, besides many private galleries. F. D. S.

The sale on December 16th of the pictures, etc., left by Sir Henry Irving brought out the portrait of Irving as Philip of Spain, painted by Whistler. It was bought for \$25,200, and, according to rumor, will come to America. A portrait of Miss Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth brought \$6,300. Three pictures by Alma-Tamada, "A Street in Rome," "Atrium," and "The Interior of a Palace," together \$4,960. The church scene in "Much Ado about Nothing," by J. Forbes Robertson, went for \$290; the portrait of David Garrick, by Nathaniel Dance, \$420; and portrait of John Fawcett, by Sir M. A. Shee, \$575.